

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF PLATTSBURGH, NEW YORK**

**January 29, 2009**

**5:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Mayor Donald Kasprzak, Councilors Tim Carpenter (W1), Michael Kelly (W2), George Rabideau (W3), Jim Calnon (W4), Amy Valentine (W5), Chris Jackson (W6)

**Absent:** None

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**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the regular meeting of the Common Council held on January 22, 2009 are approved and placed on file among the public records of the City Clerk's Office

By Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Valentine

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**2. PAYROLLS OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS**

**RESOLVED:** That the payrolls of the various Departments of the City of Plattsburgh for the week ending January 28, 2009 in the amount of **\$ 310,251.39** are authorized and allowed and the Mayor and the City Clerk are hereby empowered and directed to sign warrants drawn on the City Chamberlain for the payment thereof.

By Councilor Calnon; Seconded by Councilor Carpenter

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

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**3. REPORTS OF CITY OFFICES & COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Report of Fire and Ambulance Responses for the week of January 22-28, 2009
- Report from the Building Inspector's Office from January 20-26, 2009
- Report from the Library of cash receipts for the month of December 2008
- Report of the monthly Parking Violations Bureau for December 2008

**RESOLVED:** That the reports as read are hereby ordered, received and placed on file among the public records of the City Clerk's Office.

By Councilor Valentine; Seconded by Councilor Rabideau

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

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#### 4. AUDITS OF CLAIMS

**RESOLVED:** That the bills approved by the Auditing Committee of the Common Council in the amount of \$ 715,295.93 are authorized and allowed and the Mayor and City Clerk (where required) are hereby authorized and directed to sign warrants drawn on the City Chamberlain for the payment thereof.

By Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Kelly  
Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson  
(All voted in the affirmative)

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#### 5. PERSONS ADDRESSING COUNCIL

**William Drew** of 13 Mason Drive said he was thankful for Mr. Jackson's op-ed piece in the Press Republican, it answered many questions Drew had. Drew attended the work session last night and appreciated a fine intelligent gentleman such as Mr. La Capra to give his expert advice. He really has the city's best interest at heart. Drew said he was an auditor for utilities and rate cases about 30 years ago. Drew commends everyone for taking in account all aspects of the problem and possible decisions regarding the rate case. Drew asked to not let politics get in the way of a decision. Drew realizes that the PSC is looking out for reliable service at a decent rate. Even though 11% rate increase is what might be applied for it has no bearing on the PSC because they decide the rate. Drew said he supports an 11% increase because we have gone years without a rate crease. He understands that its not good timing but it's a good and justice decision. The second issue in regards in lay-offs is truly a business decision and not let politics get involved. Drew's hope is that everyone (Council and Mayor) listen to Mr. La Capra seriously and MR. Treacy seriously and decide what Mr. Treacy's vision is in construction, maintenance etc. and listen to Mr. La Capra say that the system is reliable and safe and Drew believes it is because of the crews. Drew's preference is for an 11% rate increase first. Drew mentioned the talk of a Financial Director for MLD and he recalled that Councilor Jackson had said it was already in the budget. Drew said just because something is in the budget doesn't mean you have to spend the money. Finance Director would be very necessary whether it's in the budget or not.

**Meghan Samolis** of 8 Robinson View Terrance see attached speech.

**Steve Williams** of 1 Johnson Avenue said that he witnessed the debates in 2007 and thought this was a year for change but he was wrong. Williams said that when you all took office you raped my family with a 4.4% increase in taxes, are holding on to a cover for a water reservoir that costs \$1.25 per month per household, there was a loss of over \$15,000 from a camp, no change in Bove project, there is still no hotel at the "waterfront hotel." Williams asked what the cost of maintenance will be for the Waterfront Park and the Saranac Trail. They are all nice things if we can afford them but Williams wonders if they all fall under the same category as the Roundabout. He really doesn't know because in May of 2008 the Council voted to spend \$10,000 on a new website and there still isn't one. Now MLD is in the hole 1 million dollars. Williams said the question is lay off 6 MLD workers or raise the rates 11%. Already raise taxes by 5.6% for a total of 20% in your first 13 months of office. Williams said that Mr. Kelly said it will only be a raise of \$4 per month. Williams said in 2008 his bill was \$750 which would mean the raise will cost him \$8 dollars. In order for it to only go up \$4 the bill couldn't be more than \$364. Williams told Mr. Kelly that he would like to see

someone who really has a \$364 dollar electric bill. The big question is how MLD got into this mess. Could it be you allowed to write off \$30,000 to \$40,000 in unpaid electric bills or maybe the new substations? There has been a lot of talk about it coming down to family and friends however you were elected to represent over 18,000 residents in the City. Williams said if you make this decision based on family and friends, then shame on all of you. We are stuck with this Council for another two years, Williams is just not sure we can afford it.

**John Ford** 106 Pine Street felt slighted at last weeks Public Hearing about the Eminent Domain because he was limited to 5 minutes to speak and he felt he needed more time on something that is so important to him. The only thing consistent in this whole thing is him and his family. Ford said every four years the Council and Mayor change. Ford said when he put his fence up he got a letter from the Building Inspector that it needed to be trimmed down to code height. Ford said he did right away. Ford said that the property was always his property. When he was told to make the fence height legal he did. The issue about whose property it is never came up. I didn't call and say I need to be taxed more because on the tax map it says I have 82 feet but in fact the deed says 97 feet. Ford said he attended a meeting on the trail and Kevin Farrington said he had looked at my abstract. Ford is concerned about that because it is a legal document that he (Ford) had to pay for and wonders how he (Kevin) got that without his knowledge. Only one Councilor asked if he could go down and look at his property and Ford would like the whole Council to take a look at what he has done.

**Ed Champagne** 86 Court Street is not in favor of the rate increase or any increase during this time of an economic disaster. He said he is having a hard time with some of the projections that everyone has said if given a rate increase of 11%. Champagne said he is going on your (Council) statements about bills. Champagne brought in his own bills for the Council. Champagne said some one might know what the average MLD bill is. He doesn't know why we have to go off of Rabideau's electric bill. (George said his bill was average) Champagne said he has two buildings side by side on Court Street. He had the buildings checked to make sure he didn't have any major drafts etc. My bill which heats my house and my garage is about \$1,100 a month. The apartment building contains three apartments with a fireplace in each runs about \$1050 per month. Champagne collected his daughter's bill from her mobile home and the units she rents on South Peru Street. The vacant trail which his 50 X 10 costs \$150 per month just to keep the pipes from bursting, time that by the other 8 units plus her own house which costs \$400 per month equals to about \$1,500 a month. Champagne said he understands that they are older but that averages about \$400 per family. If there were to be an 11% increase on that, it is a great deal more than \$4 or \$8 dollars per month. He would like to know how you came to those figures in the beginning. Champagne said lastly if it is only an extra \$4 a month than maybe he will change his mind about all this but there has to be some kind of guarantee. Champagne left his copies with the Council

**Mayor Kasprzak** said he will have Mr. Treacy look over them also.

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## 6. OTHER ITEMS

**A.** Request from Brian White, a member of the Valcour Sailing Club and the captain for the local Soling fleet to hold the 2009 Soling North American Championship on August 14-16, 2009 at the City dock located at the Plattsburgh Boat Basin.

**RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves Brian White, a member of the Valcour Sailing Club and the captain for the local Soling fleet to hold the 2009 Soling North American Championship on August 14-16, 2009 at the City dock located at the Plattsburgh Boat Basin.

By Councilor Valentine; Second by Councilor Calnon

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**B.** Motion to waive Rule 4 for initial item “Request from the City Clerk to purchase three new workstations as well as a Microsoft Office program for each, and a printer for the total amount of \$3,800 in which the funds will come from the contingency fund.”

By Councilor Carpenter; Second by Councilor Kelly

Discussion: Councilor Carpenter explained that the software needed to run the City Clerk’s Office is no longer compatible with the computer systems.

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves the City Clerk to purchase three new workstations as well as a Microsoft Office program for each, and a printer for the total amount of \$3,800 in which the funds will come from the contingency fund.

By Councilor Carpenter; Second by Councilor Kelly

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**C.** Motion to waive Rule 4 for initial item “Request from Community Development that the City contract with Camoin Associates to complete two grant applications.”

By Councilor Carpenter; Second by Councilor Calnon

Discussion: Councilor Carpenter explained that the grants are due in four weeks and if we wait then Camoin will only have three weeks to prepare the grants.

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

**RESOLVED:** In accordance with the request therefore the Common Council approves Community Development to contract with Camoin Associates to complete two grant applications in which \$5,500 is needed to complete the second grant and that will be funded from the Contingency Fund.

By Councilor Carpenter; Second by Councilor Calnon

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow Up Action: None

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**D.** Motion to waive Rule 4 for initial item “The Mayor hands down the appointment of Police Officer to Jonathan R. Seiden effective February 2, 2009 pending the successful completion of a one year probationary period.”

By Councilor Calnon; Second by Councilor Kelly

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

**RESOLVED: THE MAYOR HANDS DOWN THE APPOINTMENT OF POLICE OFFICER TO JONATHAN R. SEIDEN EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 2, 2009 PENDING THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A ONE YEAR PROBATION PERIOD.**

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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**E.** Motion to waive Rule 4 for initial item “The Mayor hands down the appointment of Police Officer to Ryan P. Johnston effective February 2, 2009 pending the successful completion of a one year probationary period.”

By Councilor Calnon; Second by Councilor Kelly

Discussion: None

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

**RESOLVED: THE MAYOR HANDS DOWN THE APPOINTMENT OF POLICE OFFICER TO RYAN P. JOHNSTON EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 2, 2009 PENDING THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A ONE YEAR PROBATION PERIOD.**

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**ACTION TAKEN:** Adopted

Follow up Action: None

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## **7. RESOLUTIONS FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION**

- 1.** Request from the City Clerk to purchase three new workstations as well as a Microsoft Office program for each, and a printer for the total amount of \$3,800 in which the funds will come from the contingency fund.  
**(Moved to Agenda under “Other Items” letter B)**
- 2.** Request from Community Development that the City contract with Camoin Associates to complete two grant applications.

**(Moved to Agenda under “Other Items” letter C)**

3. Request from the City Chamberlain to consider the contract for services with Stafford, Owens, Curtin, Trombley, PLLC, to provide tax foreclosure services.
4. The Mayor hands down the appointment of Police Officer to Jonathan R. Seiden effective February 2, 2009 pending the successful completion of a one year probationary period.  
**(Moved to Agenda under “Other Items” letter D)**
5. The Mayor hands down the appointment of Police Officer to Ryan P. Johnston effective February 2, 2009 pending the successful completion of a one year probationary period.  
**(Moved to Agenda under “Other Items” letter E)**

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## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

**Councilor Kelly** announced that the Green Committee will be meeting on Tuesday February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room. Kelly also said he attended the monthly library meeting and Stan is doing a great job. The library increased their circulation by 13%. Stan is also attempting to get grant for solar heating panels to reduce the electric bill.

**Councilor Jackson** thanked the DPW for doing such a nice job with clearing all the snow after the storm.

**Mayor Kasprzak** said they also had to fix a big water main break all through the night until 7 a.m. as the snow storm hit and then they started the snow removal. They did an excellent job with the snow removal.

**Councilor Rabideau** said he has received complaints about the plow trucks putting snow in people's driveways. Rabideau said it must be very difficult for the plows to place the snow exactly where they want it. He said lots of people get snow built up in their driveway. He has about three feet the other day but understand that the machines don't mean to do it. Rabideau wonders how the plow picks which driveway to dump the snow in. He said he felt bad for Mike (Superintendent of Public Works)

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## **9. CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Dave Bezio** of 3 Jennifer Drive said that MLD has a \$100,000 camera provided by IEEP that can be used to look at buildings and power lines for ways to make them more efficient. Bezio said the camera spends a lot of time in its case. He said maybe MLD and the Green Committee; we could help individuals in the City who find that their bill is out of control. He said he is sure some if it is insulation. The camera tells where the heat is being lost in a building to reduce the electric bill. The camera prints out pictures and we could actually hand out to the resident. This something we could do to help lower the electric bills for residents in the City. There is a rebate program we have if you install new windows, MLD will give you \$25-\$40 towards new windows. All these things will help reduce your electric bill so if the rates have to be raised to keep the jewel running then there are some things we can do in the City to help the residents.

Motion to Adjourn by Councilor Jackson; Seconded by Councilor Calnon

Roll call: Councilors Carpenter, Kelly, Rabideau, Calnon, Valentine, Jackson

(All voted in the affirmative)

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** 6:17 p.m.